

unionist. Then they came for the Catholics. I didn't speak up then because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak up."

—Martin Niemöller, a Lutheran pastor arrested by the Gestapo in 1937.

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, then they came for the Baha'is.

The Baha'i Faith is the youngest of the world's independent monotheistic religions. Founded in Iran in 1844, it now claims more than 5 million adherents in 236 countries and territories. Gathering worshipers from nearly every national, ethnic and religious background, the Baha'is preach tolerance, diversity and equality.

To an Islamic dictatorship that denies its people basic political and human rights, this religion founded in Iran on the tenets of religious tolerance remains an anathema to the Supreme Leader. And the world is standing by as Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority nears its final stages.

In 2006, Iran's Armed Forces Command Headquarters ordered the Ministry of Information, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Police Force to identify members of the Baha'i Faith in Iran and monitor their activities.

In that same year, we saw the largest roundup of Baha'is since the 1980s. The Iranian Interior Ministry ordered provincial officials to "cautiously and carefully monitor and manage" all Baha'i social activities. The Central Security Office of Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology ordered 81 Iranian universities to expel any student discovered to be a Baha'i.

In 2007, the situation worsened. More than two-thirds of the Baha'is enrolled in universities were expelled once identified as Baha'is. Police entered Baha'i homes and businesses to collect details on family members.

Twenty-five industries were ordered to deny licenses to Baha'is. Employers were pressured to fire Baha'i employees and banks were instructed to refuse loans to Baha'i-owned businesses. Baha'i cemeteries were destroyed.

In November 2007, three Baha'i youths were detained for educating underprivileged children.

The following month, the Iranian Parliament published a draft Islamic penal code, requiring the death penalty for all "apostates"—a term applied to Baha'is and any convert away from Islam.

On May 14, 2008, seven members of Iran's national Baha'i coordinating group were arrested. This is reminiscent of the mass disappearance and assumed murder of all the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Iran in August, 1980.

On August 1, 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H. Res. 1008, condemning the persecution of Baha'is in Iran and calling for the immediate release of all Baha'is imprisoned solely on the basis of their religion.

Our bipartisan voice bought the Baha'i leadership some time—but it appears only 6 months.

This week, the Government of Iran charged the seven Baha'i leaders with "espionage for Israel, insulting religious sanctities and propaganda against the Islamic republic." Deputy Tehran Prosecutor Hassan Haddad declared, "The charges against seven defendants in the case of the illegal Baha'i group were exam-

ined . . . and the case will be sent to the revolutionary court next week."

It is time for the international community to act.

Today, along with my colleagues JIM MCGOVERN and BRAD SHERMAN, I am introducing a bipartisan resolution calling on the Government of Iran to immediately release the seven Baha'i leaders and all others imprisoned solely the basis of their religion.

I urge President Obama and Secretary Clinton, in concert with the international community, to publicly condemn Iran's persecution of its religious minorities and demand the release of these seven community leaders.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN LEE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 13, 2009

Mr. LEE of New York. Madam Speaker, I regret that I do not have the opportunity to participate in today's debate due to the need to be back in my district. I sincerely appreciate the Members of the House engaging in a moment of silence to honor the memory of those who lost their lives in last night's tragic accident in Clarence, NY.

America's current economic crisis has hit western New York hard, and from the outset of this debate, I have expressed the need for a timely, fiscally responsible recovery plan that provides the economy with the jumpstart it needs to create jobs.

This new Washington spending plan simply fails to meet this common-sense standard of economic growth. It is far more focused on growing Washington than it is on stimulating job creation and had I been present I would have voted no.

In many ways, this spending bill is inferior to its predecessor. It creates nearly just as many and expands more government programs while severely limiting tax relief for small businesses, which create most of our economy's new jobs. In fact, for every one dollar this spending bill devotes to small-business tax relief, Washington gets to keep more than 32 dollars for itself to create new government programs.

Creating jobs in western New York has been at the top of my "to-do" list since before I ran for Congress, when I was helping run a family manufacturing business.

That's why I helped craft a timely, fiscally responsible economic recovery plan that creates twice the jobs at half the cost of this Washington spending bill. Additionally, my recovery plan creates 184,000 more jobs for New Yorkers than this spending bill.

The plan I helped put together spurs job creation right now by providing relief for 100 percent of income taxpayers, preserving "net operating loss carryback" reforms that help small business weather tough economic times, and implementing a tax deduction equal to 20 percent of income for those small businesses with 500 or fewer employees.

Washington's refusal to reform its spending habits and focus its efforts on job creation puts significant taxpayer dollars at risk. In fact,

the massive spending in this plan is enough to create budget deficits 2.5 times the size of President George W. Bush's deficits over the same 8-year period.

EXPRESSING GROWING CONCERN WITH THE RECENT RISE IN ANTI-SEMITISM IN SOUTH AMERICA

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 13, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution expressing growing concerns about the recent rise of anti-Semitism in South America, and the accompanying acts of violence and hatred against members of the Jewish community there.

Throughout my life, and throughout my tenure in Congress, I have always condemned the unconscionable spread of anti-Semitism wherever it has raised its ugly head. There is never an excuse to single out members of the Jewish community for attack, to destroy their sacred property, to boycott their businesses, or to perpetuate physical harm.

From Asia to Africa to Europe to the Middle East, too many leaders have too often used anti-Semitism to deflect attention from their own failings, or to stir up their domestic populations for political gain.

We see the pernicious tidings of anti-Semitism, this time in South America. In Venezuela, Bolivia and Argentina, Jewish communities in recent weeks and months have been the subject of vicious attacks, verbal abuse, and government-supported expressions of extreme intolerance and intimidation. My resolution highlights some of these recent attacks, including the January 30th assault on the Tiferet Israel synagogue in Caracas, Venezuela, in which armed men using tear gas violently ransacked this house of worship.

While I am pleased that eleven suspects have been arrested, I am disturbed to learn that a majority of these men are police officers. Indeed, the Venezuelan government of late has fostered a climate of hatred, openly questioning the loyalties of Venezuela's Jewish community, and using recent events in Israel to score cheap political points by assailing members of the Jewish community.

Madam Speaker, I could tell a similar story about events in Bolivia and Argentina, where Jewish children have arrived at their schools to find swastikas painted on walls and graffiti admonishing Jews to leave the country.

These attacks are not isolated incidents of a few bad apples, but rather reflect the systematic use of violence and intimidation in the place of dialogue and debate. Anti-Semitism is not a legitimate form of public protest. It never has been and it never will be. We cannot, in good conscience, allow these acts of hatred to go unnoticed and unreported. I ask my colleagues to support this resolution to condemn these acts of violence and to encourage the Venezuelan, Bolivian, and Argentinean governments to take all necessary steps to ensure that anti-Semitism is not tolerated in South America.